In The Claims:

Please cancel claim 2 and amend claims 1, 4 and 5, so that the claims hereafter read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for teaching an individual, the method comprising:

providing a virtual world comprising:

a virtual environment;

a plurality of virtual elements within said virtual environment, each of said virtual elements being capable of interacting with other virtual elements within the virtual environment; and

user controls for enabling the individual to interact with at least one of said virtual elements within said virtual environment;

wherein at least one of said virtual elements comprises a virtual character comprising a behavior state, an emotion state and a learning state, and wherein said behavior state, said emotion state and said learning state are capable of changing in response to (i) interaction with other virtual elements within the virtual environment, and/or (ii) commands from said user controls, with the learning state comprising a node-based system capable of dynamically adding new sets of nodes, whereby the virtual character is capable of learning a new skill which extends beyond a pre-existing set of nodes; and

teaching the individual a desired skill by inducing the individual to actively teach the desired skill to a virtual character within the virtual environment by providing a virtual character with the instructions needed to learn the desired

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skill, wherein the teaching of the individual is carried out
effected by:

(i) prompting the individual to provide a virtual
character with the instructions necessary to explicitly teach the
desired skill to the virtual character within said virtual
environment; and

(ii) providing a positive response to the individual
when the virtual character learns the desired skill.

2.   (Canceled)

3.   (Canceled)

4.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 2
wherein said instructions comprise direct instructions.

5.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 2
wherein said instructions comprise indirect instructions.

6.   (Original) A method according to claim 5 wherein said
indirect instructions comprise providing an example.

7.   (Original) A method according to claim 5 wherein said
indirect instructions comprise creating an inference.

8.   (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said
virtual environment is configured so that additional virtual
elements can be introduced into said virtual environment.